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# THE CRUISE OF THE "QUERO"

HOW WE CARRIED THE NEWS TO THE KING

A NEGLECTED CHAPTER IN LOCAL HISTORY

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BY ROBERT S. RANTOUL.

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No American's advent in London ever produced so real a sensation as did that of a Salem sailor, Capt. John Derby, in May, 1775. He brought the news of Concord and Lexington in advance of the King's messenger, and made it known to the British public. His appearance upon that excited scene was unheralded and startling. To liken the patriot, making struggles and sacrifices for his country, to Jack-in-the-box or to Harlequin in the pantomime, shot up through a stage trap-door, is not dignified nor proper, but the appearance of neither is more electric. The mystery of his coming and of his going was equally impenetrable. The incident was dramatic, but it was also

terribly momentous. It convulsed an empire. A word of preface must be pardoned to sketch in outline the situation then existing — the stage and its setting upon which entered this unknown actor.

There were, so to say, two joint governors of this province in 1774-5. Hutchinson, relieved of the actual administration of the office, summoned to England and hurried into the presence of the King for a two hours' audience, without time to exchange his sea-clothing for the tinsel of the court — bidden to kiss hands, contrary to custom, in his Majesty's private closet, and taken at once into the closest confidence of the circle next the throne, was, from his arrival, June, 1774, until his death in London, June, 1780, a sort of Advisory Governor near the Court of St. James. Without his counsels no act of the ministry seems to have been decided on, though if his pacific promptings had been oftener heeded things might have gone better. Gage, who succeeded him here on the spot in May, 1774, discharged the active functions of "Captain-General and Governor-in-chief," and was the actual Governor-Resident of Massachusetts,—helping forward the agitation he was sent to quell by little displays of a willingness to conciliate in small matters, by a lack of decision in greater things, by an utter incapacity generally to grasp the situation. After Bunker Hill, Gage was superseded.

The letters which we shall print give hints of all this sufficient for our purpose. If one reads between the lines they tell enough. Hutchinson, we need not add, was a native of Boston, an ex-chief Justice as well as an ex-Governor of Massachusetts Bay, and the distinguished historian of the Province. Gage was a soldier with an honorable record, bearing scars received while fighting by the side of Washington at the defeat of Braddock. He had earned all his honors on this continent — had been for the ten years just past Commander-in-chief of all the King's forces in America, and had married an American wife. He was the second son of Viscount Gage of Sussex and the Lord Gage, at whose manor in Sussex Hutchinson was a frequent visitor, was his elder brother.

I shall make no attempt to describe the feverish flutter

of the English mind in May, 1775. "The stocks," says Horace Walpole, "began to grow a little nervous." The merchants of London were feeling that the American war which threatened would destroy them if it came. John Wilkes, the eccentric and fearless radical who was at the moment Lord Mayor of London, openly espoused the contention of the Colonies. The Quakers, a large and influential body, deprecated force, as was their wont. In Court circles, and the more strongly in the ratio of nearness to the throne, the impression prevailed that all pretence on our part of a determination to resist was put on for effect, and that the first serious demonstration of the home government would result in our submission. Franklin and Lee were in London as the agents of Massachusetts. The pronounced friends of America in England were without a policy — they were little better than obstructionists seeking to postpone the final stroke in hopes some favorable chance might save the country — and they, with a great mass of well-disposed but ill-instructed Englishmen, who shrank from taking arms against their kindred but felt that loyalty would soon demand it, awaited nervously the arrival of news which must put the hoped-for conciliation beyond their reach. Neither war nor martial law had been declared; recruiting in the American regiments was slow; nor had the large force which Gage demanded been sent him. Gage's late dispatches to Dartmouth, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies in Lord North's cabinet, had been intended to allay apprehension of an early issue and had measurably done so. He was a temporizer by habit and dreaded an outbreak. Gage had been relieved as Commander-in-chief in America and had been sent to Massachusetts primarily to enforce the Boston Port Bill or, as Lord North said in the House of Peers, to make of Boston an inland town, sixteen miles from any harbor, and to transfer the capital of the state by the King's orders to Salem, together with all the commercial and social advantages to Salem, Marblehead and Beverly, which must incidentally result to them from the distress of Boston.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Neither Hutchinson nor Gage were strangers to Salem society. Hutchinson had been royally entertained here at the old Assembly House which stood where

The close terms of intimacy existing between Hutchinson and such men as Dr. Samuel Johnson, the lexicographer and author of "Taxation no Tyranny," Edward Gibbon, the historian of the "Decline and Fall," then holding a seat in the House of Commons, General Gage, Lord Gage his brother, Lord Dartmouth, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the three Major Generals, Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne, just setting out with fresh instructions for America, ex-Governors Pownall and Bernard, and all the colonial refugees in London, are patent to the reader of Hutchinson's diary.

In the midst of surroundings like these, the public mind intensely and vaguely apprehensive and for the moment without definite expectation, an unknown sailor bursts upon the scene. Reaching London so soon after the events he claimed to herald, his story seemed on that account even to be tainted with suspicion. Walpole dubbed him the "Accidental Captain." Coming in a fashion which he did not explain and which they could not understand, proclaiming in the highways that which both friends and enemies of the Colonies were at the moment alike averse to hear, he naturally had the ear of everybody. A collision, he said, had occurred and the government had lost. Who was this unbidden guest charged with such a startling message? Was it safe to rely on the presumptions against his honesty and to dismiss the tale as groundless? Was there not rather a verisimilitude about it which, like Banquo's ghost, would not away at anybody's bidding? The streets were agitated but the Court circles were more profoundly agitated. If a battle had been fought, where was the government

the South Church Chapel now stands, in May, 1774, on the occasion of his last military review, and he had clung for years to the notion of removing the Capital of the Province to Salem. John Adams wrote to his wife that he knew this to be the fact and stated his grounds. (See Hist. Coll. Essex Institute, Vol. xxxi, pages 71, 82-3-4.)

Gage had been welcomed with a ball at the same place on the King's Birthday in June, 1774, and had passed that summer at the Hooper Mansion in Danvers, convening the Provincial Legislature in the Salem Town House. The Boston Cadets, when they resented his treatment of their commander, John Hancock, came to Salem to deliver up their colors. When Gage marched a regiment up from Salem Neck as far as the Williams House, now the site of the Cadet Armory, to disperse a Salem Town Meeting in August, 1774, Captain Richard Derby the father of Capt. John Derby, was one of the public spirited men who stood forth to oppose this hot-headed policy and was of the committee who confronted Gage in the historic scene at the Colonel Brown Mansion located where now is Derby Square.



messenger with the authorized dispatch which should have reported it? If a battle had not been fought why this crafty tale invented out of nothing for a nine days' wonder? It was proposed to arrest Derby and bring him before the Privy Council. But was this politic? Would this not show that the stocks, grown nervous, had, as Walpole wrote, "affected other pulses?" Hutchinson could not wholly reject the story. He wrote in his diary, June 10th, when the government dispatches finally reached London: "I assured many gentlemen who would give no credit to Darby's account that it would prove near the truth. And now they are more struck than if they had not been so sanguine before."

Let us deal with events in their sequence. Derby reached London on Sunday evening, May 28th, and took lodgings. He had with him copies of the Salem Gazette for April 21st and 25th, containing a pretty good account of the transactions of the 19th, attributed in part to the pen of Timothy Pickering. He had, also, a letter of instructions from the Provincial Congress then sitting at Watertown, dated April 26, accrediting him and his secret mission to Franklin and Lee. And especially he had with him copies of several affidavits, giving sworn statements of what had happened, from the lips not only of Americans who had taken part but of British prisoners also, Ensign Gould among them. This evidence he lost no time in putting into the hands of the Lord Mayor of London, and this ardent partisan was prompt to disseminate the statements furnished. On May 29th the news was well abroad and was received with consternation and with the wildest comment. Hutchinson's entry in his diary for May 29, 1775, is this:

"Cap<sup>n</sup> Darby came to town last evening. He is sent by the Provincial Congress in a vessel in ballast, to publish here their account of an action between the troops and the inhabitants on the 19th of April. A vessel which sailed four days before with dispatches from Gage is not arrived.<sup>2</sup> The opposition here rejoice that the Americans

<sup>2</sup>It is not without interest to observe that Capt. Derby's statement, to the effect that a Government dispatch had sailed four days before him in the "Sukey," was accepted without question by everybody in London, King and commoner alike. The Massachusetts Governor knew something of Salem shipmasters in general

fight, after it had been generally said they would not. The conduct of the Boston leaders is much the same as it was after the inhabitants were killed the 5 of March, 1770. They hurry away a vessel that their partial accounts may make the first impression. I think Gage's will be different. The inhabitants, after this action, collected together and have formed an army at Cambridge under Ward their general: Stop'd all communication between country and town and Gage suffers none of the town to go out. I am greatly anxious for my family and friends.

"I carried the news to Lord Dartmouth, who was much struck with it. The first accounts were very unfavorable, it not being known that they all came from one side. The alarm abated before night, and we wait with a greater degree of calmness for the accounts from the other side. Darby sailed from Salem the 29th of April."

Next day Lord Dartmouth published, in the government Gazette, an official caution in these words:

"Secretary of State's Office, Whitehall, May 30, 1775.

"A report having been spread, and an account having been printed and published, of a skirmish between some of the people in the Province of *Massachusetts Bay* and a detachment of His Majesty's troops, it is proper to inform the publick that no advices have as yet been received in the *American* Department of any such event.

"There is reason to believe that there are dispatches from General *Gage* on board the *Sukey*, Captain *Brown*, which, though she sailed four days before the vessel that brought the printed accounts, is not arrived."

This bulletin in turn called forth a counter-blast in these words from Lee (Franklin had sailed for America) which appeared, May 31, in the journals favorable to the Colonies:

"London, May 30. As a doubt of the authenticity of the account from Salem, touching an engagement between the King's troops and the provincials in the *Massachusetts*

and of the Derby family in particular. No other evidence of the fact had reached London save Derby's assertion. Yet it figures in all the speculations and discussions of the hour. At last a story reached London, June 3, from vessels arrived at Liverpool and at Bristol, that there had been fighting, but it gave no details. Derby left London, June 1, and Gage's dispatch reached Whitehall, June 10.

Bay, may arise from a paragraph in the Gazette of this evening, I desire to inform all those who wish to see the original affidavits, which confirm the account, that they are deposited at the Mansion House with the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, for their inspection."

[Signed] "Arthur Lee, the Agent for the House of Representatives of the Massachusetts Bay."

Horne Tooke assumed the statement to be true, and commented on it in print in terms which soon cost him a trial for high treason and a year's imprisonment.<sup>3</sup>

On the same day we find Gibbon, the independent member of Parliament for St. Ives, writing this interesting account to his friend Holroyd, afterwards to become Lord Sheffield and a person of much distinction as well as his biographer:

"You will probably see in the papers the Boston Gazette Extraordinary.<sup>4</sup> I shall therefore mention a few circumstances which I have from Governor Hutchinson.

<sup>3</sup> The Rev. John Horne, first a curate in Kent, who afterwards studied law, but was refused a license to practise because he had taken Holy Orders, became a famous philological authority, commended by Doctor Johnson, and a relentless political agitator. He had been educated at Eton and Cambridge. He later added the name of Tooke, and was first the friend and supporter and then the bitter opponent of John Wilkes. He was twice defeated for the House of Commons and at last, in 1801, elected only to be refused his seat on the same ground on which he had been excluded from the bar. He was tried for high treason on account of the sympathy he expressed with the French Revolution, and was successfully defended by Erskine.

He was among the most ardent friends of America, and on the arrival of Derby with his dispatches he did not hesitate to stigmatize the action of Gage and the King's troops as murder. This he did in a publication dated June 9, before the promulgation of Gage's dispatch, and he forthwith proceeded to raise a fund of £100 for the relief of the families of victims: the sum, a large part of which he himself paid, to be forwarded to Franklin. For all this, "done in contempt of our Sovereign Lord and King," Horne-Tooke was put upon his trial, July 4, 1777. Mansfield was judge and Thurlow attorney-general, and that prosecuting officer urged that the pillory was the proper penalty for the offence. But no such penalty was inflicted. He was duly found guilty after a trial of extraordinary length and bitterness, which is reported in full in the volume of State Trials for the sixteenth year of George III, and he served a sentence of a year's imprisonment and a fine of £200.

Ensign Gould was in the witness-box and swore, among other things, that he saw no scalping of British soldiers at Concord or at Lexington, but that he heard of it. He swore to the continued firing of cannon as alarm guns after their start from Boston on the march to Concord. At this disclosure Lord Mansfield showed much surprise and doubt and cross-examined him closely, but Ensign Gould adhered to his statement that the Provincials had cannon. Perhaps some of Richard Derby's guns had found their way to Charlestown. (See British State Trials for 1776, in Volume XI, published 1781, for years from 11th Richard II to 16th George III. Also Hutchinson's Diary, pp. 463-7.)

<sup>4</sup> Boston was at this time in the military occupation of the British. There was no Boston Gazette. Salem will be found, in the course of this paper, to be confounded by English authorities with both Marblehead and Boston. Gibbon in writing Holroyd, March 15, 1774, about removing the seat of government, calls it "New Salem," perhaps contrasting us with Salem in the Province of Madras, for the British occupation of India was just commencing. The Englishman of the period knew less of the geography of Massachusetts than he knew of the moun-

"That Gazette is the only account arrived. As soon as the business was over the Provincial Congress dispatched a vessel with the news for the good people of England. The vessel was taken up to sail instantly at a considerable loss and expense, as she went without any lading but her ballast. No other letters were allowed to be put on board nor did the crew know their destination 'till they were on the banks of Newfoundland. The master is a man of character and moderation, and from his mouth the following particulars have been drawn. *Fides sit penes auctorem.*

"It cannot fairly be called a defeat of the King's troops; since they marched to Concord, destroyed or brought away the stores, and then returned back. They were so much fatigued with their day's work — they had marched above thirty miles — that they encamped in the evening at some distance from Boston without being attacked in the night. It can hardly be called an engagement; there never was any large body of provincials. Our troops during the march and retreat were chiefly harassed by flying parties from behind the stone walls along the road and by many shots from the windows as they passed through the villages. It was then they were guilty of setting fire to some of those hostile houses. Ensign Gould had been sent with only twelve men to repair a wooden bridge for the retreat; he was attacked by the Saints with a Minister at their head, who killed two men and took the ensign with the others prisoners. The next day the Country rose. When the Master came away he says that Boston was invested by a camp of about fifteen hundred tents. They have cannon. Their general is a Col. Ward, a member of the late council, and who served with credit in the last war. His outposts are advanced so near the town that they can talk to those of General Gage.

tains of the moon. Lord North stated in the House of Peers, in discussing the Boston Port Bill, that hereafter all vessels would be "searched at Marblehead in the province of Salem." In 1877, I was asked, across a dinner table in Switzerland, by the cousin of a conspicuous London writer, who had passed her whole life as a governess teaching the girls of some of the best families in London, whether the Americans had begun to colonize west of the Alleghany Mountains! The geography of this Continent, except in outline, was no part of an English education until the unexpected result of our Civil War made it necessary to know more about us. If there is one thing the typical Englishman respects it is power, and after the Union triumphed, both in arms and in finance, the educated Briton made haste to study the phenomenon.

By a "Gazette Extraordinary" I suppose is meant what our newsboys would now call a "Gazette Extra."





CAPTAIN RICHARD DERBY

1712-1783

Engraved for the Century Magazine from a portrait copied by J. Alden Weir  
after the original painting by Colonel Henry Sargent

"This looks serious, and is indeed so, but the Governor observed to me that the month of May is the time for sowing Indian corn, the great sustenance of the Province, and that, unless the Insurgents are determined to hasten a famine, they must have returned to their own habitations: especially as the restraining act (they had already heard of it) cuts off all foreign supply, which indeed generally becomes necessary to the Province before winter."<sup>5</sup>

In writing to his son Thomas, Hutchinson says:

"LONDON, ST. JAMES'S STREET  
31 MAY, 1775.

"MY DEAR SON,

Captain Darby, in ballast, arrived at Southampton from Marblehead the 27, and came to London the next evening. I am greatly distressed for you. Darby's own accounts confirm many material parts of the narrative from the congress, and they that know him say he deserves credit and that he has a good character: but I think those people would not have been at the expense of a vessel from Marblehead or Salem to England for the sake of telling the truth."

On the same day Hutchinson wrote Gage as follows:

"ST. JAMES'S STREET, 31 MAY, 1775.

"DEAR SIR,—

The arrival of Captain Darby from Salem on the 28th with dispatches from the Congress at Watertown, immediately published in the papers, has caused a general anxiety in the minds of all who wish the happiness of Britain and her Colonies. I have known the former interesting events have been partially represented: I therefore believe with discretion the representation now received. It is unfortunate to have the first impression made from that quarter. I am informed that this manoeuvre was conducted so privately that the ship's crew did not know they were bound to England until they

<sup>5</sup> This is quite in line with what Governor Hutchinson had told George III of the resources of this Province.

*The King.*—"To what produce is your climate best adapted?"

*Gov. Hutchinson.*—"To grazing, Sir; your Majesty has not a finer Colony for grass in all your dominions: And nothing is more profitable in America than pasture, because labour is very dear."

*The King.*—"Then you import all your bread corn from the other Colonies?"

*Gov. Hutchinson.*—"No, Sir, scarce any, except for the use of the maritime towns. In the country towns the people raise grain enough for their own expending and sometimes for exportation. They live upon coarse bread made of rye and corn mixed, and by long use they learn to prefer this to flour or wheat bread."

*The King.*—"What corn?"

*Gov. Hutchinson.*—"Indian corn, or, as it is called in Authors, Maize."

*The King.*—"Ay, I know it. Does that make good bread?"

*Gov. Hutchinson.*—"Not by itself, Sir; the bread will soon be dry and husky; but the Rye keeps it moist, and some of our country people prefer a bushel of Rye to a bushel of Wheat, if the price should be the same."

*The King.*—"That's very strange."

were on the Newfoundland Banks. It is said your dispatches are on board Captain Brown, who sailed some days before Darby. I hope they are at hand and will afford us some relief."

Lord Dartmouth, the next day, addresses this official communication to General Gage:

"WHITEHALL, 1ST JUNE, 1775.

"SIR:

Since my letter to you of 27th ult. an account has been printed here, accompanied with depositions to verify it, of skirmishes between a detachment of the troops under your command and different bodies of the Provincial Militia.

It appears upon the fullest inquiry that this account, which is chiefly taken from a Salem newspaper, has been published by a Capt. Darby, who arrived on Friday or Saturday at Southampton in a small vessel in ballast, directly from Salem, and from every circumstance, relating to this person and the vessel, it is evident he was employed by the Provincial Congress to bring this account, which is plainly made up for the purpose of conveying every possible prejudice and misrepresentation of the truth.

From the answers he has given to such questions as have been asked, there is the greatest probability that the whole amounts to no more than that a Detachment, sent by you to destroy Cannon and Stores collected at Concord for the purpose of aiding Rebellion, were fired upon, at different times, by the people of the Country in small bodies from behind trees & houses, but that the party effected the service they went upon, and returned to Boston, and I have the satisfaction to tell you that, the affair being considered in that light by all discerning men, it has had no other effect here than to raise that just indignation which every honest man must feel at the rebellious conduct of the New England Colonies. At the same time it is very much to be lamented, that we have not some account from you of the transaction, which I do not mention from any supposition that you did not send the earliest intelligence of it, for we know from Darby that a vessel with dispatches sailed four days before him. We expect the arrival of that vessel with great impatience, but 'till she arrives I can form no decisive judgment of what has happened, and therefore can have nothing more to add but that I am &c, Dartmouth."

A private letter from London, dated the same day, reached the Provincial Congress at Watertown and was there promulgated. Here is an extract:

"The intelligence by Captain Darby of the defeat of General Gage's men under Lord Percy by the Americans on the 19th of April last has given very general pleasure here, as the newspapers will testify. 'Tis not with certainty that one can speak of the disposition of people in England with respect to the contest with America, though we are clear that the friends of America increase every day, particularly since the above intelligence. It is believed the ministers have not as yet formed any plan in consequence of the action of April 19. They are in total confusion and consternation and wait for General Gage's despatches by Captain Brown."



Urban's "Gentleman's Magazine" of London, for May and June, 1775, contains expressions of the feeling awakened by these events and introduces Captain Derby to its readers in the first instance as a bearer of Government dispatches. It accepts his statements without question.

Gibbon writes again to Holroyd :

"BENTINCK STREET, JUNE 3RD, 1775.

"The American news becomes every hour more problematical. Darby, the master of the ship, has not condescended to show to any one the original of the Salem Gazette. He has refused to come to Lord Dartmouth, and what is still more extraordinary, though he says he left his ship at Southampton, a person of consequence sent down there by government has not been able to learn the least news about it. Yet, on the other hand, a ship from New York is certainly arrived at Bristol with the report that a skirmish at Boston was talked of. No news from Gage."

And again later in these words :

"Though Darby's vessel cannot be found, it is pretty clear he is no impostor. He arrived in his boat at Southampton, and probably left his ship in some creek of the Isle of Wight. He has now left town, and is gone, it is said, on a trading voyage to purchase ammunition in France and Spain. Do you not admire the lenity of government? This day news came that a ship arrived at Liverpool from Rhode Island. She sailed the 20th, the day after the Skirmish, and has brought a general confirmation of it. There was a report that evening of the arrival of the "Sukey" from Gage, but it certainly is not true, and you know as much of the matter as Lord North."

And so feeling rose higher as the mystery deepened.

On June 3, Hutchinson wrote to his friend Dr. Samuel Johnson in these words :

"LONDON, ST. JAMES STREET, 3rd JUNE, 1775.

"Our latest advices from New England are of a very serious nature to all; they are very distressing to me, who am so immediately interested in them. *Bella! Horrida Bella!* We have only one side, the Congress at Watertown having sent a light schooner which has been arrived six or seven days and no intelligence yet from the General; until that arrives, sentiments upon measures seem to be suspended. I hear one and another of the king's ministers say there is no receding. And yet to think of going on makes me shudder. May God Almighty order the event in mercy to my unhappy country!"

On that day Hutchinson makes this entry in his diary :  
 "June 3rd. Went into the City to Mr. Lane's counting room." [Lane and Fraser were for several generations

the London correspondents of the Derby family.] "Found that Captain Darby had not been seen since the first instant; that he had a letter of credit from Lane on some house in Spain. Afterwards I saw Mr. Pownall" [assistant Secretary of State under Lord Dartmouth] "at Lord Dartmouth's office, where I carried Colonel Pickman" [of Salem] "and Pownall was of opinion Darby was gone to Spain to purchase ammunition, arms, &c. We are still in a state of uncertainty concerning the action in Massachusetts. Vessels are arrived at Bristol, which met with other vessels on their passage, and received as news that there had been a battle, but could tell no particulars."

The entry in the same diary for June 4th is as follows:

"Mr. Keene" [a member of Parliament] "called, and seems much affected with the American news. He gave a hint about the Hessian and Hanoverian troops, but seemed to suppose them to serve as a suppletory for troops to go from home, rather than to be sent to America themselves."

"Wind still easterly and no intelligence."

"It is said that Darby left his lodgings the first instant, and is supposed to have sailed. Mr. Pownall sent to Southampton to inquire, and the collector knew of no such vessel there. It is supposed he left her in some small harbor or inlet and came in his boat to Southampton. Many people began to complain of the publication, and wondered he had not been taken up and examined. He took a letter of credit, Colonel Pickman intimated, for Spain. He has said to some that he had a vessel gone or going to Spain with a cargo of fish: to others, that he was going for a load of mules."

A Vienna correspondent of the New York "Gazette and Mercury" makes this explanation of the quandary in which Derby's seamanship had placed the ministry: "The ship *SUKER* not yet arriving, on board of which the government dispatches are, causes much altercation among the politicians. And yet it is what happens every day in the commercial world."

"Captain Darby's ship which brought over the printed account, is a small vessel of about 60 tons, schooner rigged, and quite light; and the ship *SUKER* is a large

ship, about 200 tons, and heavily loaded to a capital house in the Boston trade. These circumstances may very well account for the difference of time between the arrival of the two ships."

On June 9th the "Sukey" with Gage's dispatch arrived at last. It did not much allay the feverish unrest.

Hutchinson's diary contains this entry for June 10th :

"A lieutenant in the navy arrived about noon at Lord Dartmouth's office. Mr. Pownall gave me notice, knowing my anxiety ; but though relieved from suspense, yet received but little comfort, from the accounts themselves being much the same with what Darby brought. The material difference is the declaration by Smith, who was the commander of the first party though not present at the first action, that the inhabitants fired first, and though by the returns only 63 were killed outright, yet 157 were wounded, and 24 missing ; which upon the whole is a greater number than Darby reported but not so many killed."

A private letter from Leeds, dated June 10, says :

... "One of the Lords in administration was actually at St. Dunstan's Church on Thursday evening to offer up his prayers for the arrival of the Sukey, and good news from the king's friends in America."

The London Press contained this comment :

"TO THE PUBLICK.

"LONDON, JUNE 12, 1775.

"When the news of a massacre first arrived, the pensioned writer of the *Gazette* entreated the publick 'to suspend their judgment, as Government had received no tidings of the matter.' It was added that there was every reason to expect despatches from General Gage, by a vessel called the *Sukey*.' The publick have suspended their judgment ; they have waited the arrival of the *Sukey* ; and the humane part of mankind have wished that the fatal tale related by Captain Derby might prove altogether fictitious. To the great grief of every thinking man, this is not the case. We are now in possession of both the accounts. The *Americans* have given their narrative of the massacre ; the favourite official servants have given a *Scotch* account of the skirmish. In what one material fact do the two relations, when contrasted with each other, disagree ? The *Americans* said 'that a detachment of the King's Troops advanced towards *Concord* ; that they attempted to secure two bridges on different roads beyond *Concord* ; that when they reached Lexington they found a body of Provincials exercising on a green ; that on discovering the Provincial militia thus employed, the King's Troops called out to them to disperse,

damned them for a parcel of rebels, and killed one or two, as the most effectual method of intimidating the rest.' This the writer of the *Scotch* account in the *Gazette* styles, 'marching up to the rebels to inquire the reason of being so assembled.' Both relations, however, agree in this, that a question was asked; the pensioned varnisher only saying that it was asked in a civil way, attended with the loss of blood.

"Thus far, then, the facts, in every material circumstance, precisely agree; and as yet, we have every reason to believe that the *Salem Gazette* is to the full as authentick as our Government paper, which, as a literary composition, is a disgrace to the Kingdom.

"The *Salem Gazette* assured us that the King's Troops were compelled to return from *Concord*; that a handful of militia put them to rout, and killed and wounded several as they fled. Is this contradicted in the *English Gazette*? quite the contrary; it is confirmed. The *Scotch* account of the skirmish acknowledges that 'on the hasty return of the troops from *Concord*, they were very much annoyed, and several of them were killed and wounded.' The *Scotch* account also adds 'that the Provincials kept up a scattering fire during the whole of the march of the King's Troops of fifteen miles, by which means several of them were killed and wounded.' If the *American Militia* 'kept up a scattering fire on the King's Troops, of fifteen miles,' the Provincials must have pursued, and the Regulars must have fled, which confirms the account given in the *Salem Gazette*, wherein it is asserted that the Regulars 'were forced to retreat.' Whether they marched like mutes at a funeral, or whether they fled like the relations and friends of the present ministry who were amongst the rebel army at the battle of *Callodon*, is left entirely to the conjecture of the reader; though it should seem that a scattering fire, poured in upon a retreating enemy for fifteen miles together, would naturally, like goads applied to the sides of oxen, make them march off as fast as they could."

July 1st, Dartmouth sent Gage this mild rebuke :

"WHITEHALL, 1st JULY, 1775.

"SIR: On the 10th of last month in the morning, Lieutenant Nunn arrived at my office with your despatch containing an account of the transaction on the 19th of April of which the public had before received intelligence by a schooner, to all appearances sent by the enemies of government, on purpose to make an impression here by representing the affair between the King's troops and the rebel Provincials in a light the most favorable to their own view. Their industry on this occasion had its effect, in leaving for some days a false impression upon people's minds, and I mention it to you with a hope that, in any future event of importance, it will be thought proper, both by yourself and the admiral, to send your dispatches by one of the light vessels of the fleet."<sup>6</sup>

We have quoted enough to show the state of panic into which the arrival of the *Salem* sailor plunged British

<sup>6</sup> Dartmouth's dispatch from Gage, with its inclosures, is printed in full in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. XIV, pp. 348-52.

society near the throne. A word will be pardoned explaining the scheme upon which Captain Derby acted.

The hot, tumultuous April day of blood was scarcely over before the more sagacious of the Patriots about Boston were planning how to make the most of the new situation. It was their first care to show that they were within the law; not the aggressors, — not disturbers of the peace of the realm, but champions of the rights of Englishmen. Let them tell the story in their own words.

Three days after the battle, Saturday, April 22nd, the Provincial Congress sat at Concord, and voted a committee "to take depositions *in perpetuum* from which a full account of the transactions of the troops under General Gage in the route to and from Concord on Wednesday last may be collected to be sent to England by the first ship from Salem." Captain Richard Derby, a retired shipmaster of Salem, seems to have been a member of that Congress. It had organized itself at Salem in the preceding October. He had been present at the North Bridge in Salem in February, and had helped to frustrate there Gage's attempt to seize some nineteen ships' guns which were being mounted for the use of Massachusetts as field artillery. Eight of these guns belonged to him. He had suffered, both in purse and person, from the arrogance of the ministerial policy, and was ready on the instant to do what he could to further the purposes of the Provincial Congress. He was engaged at the moment, as a prosperous merchant, in trade with the West Indies and the Mediterranean ports. In this trade he employed, for the most part, small craft of fifty or sixty tons burden. The typical seagoing schooner of the period is here depicted from a painting of the "Baltick," one of the three water-color drawings of her in possession of the Essex Institute, though the "Baltick" was not owned by Captain Derby.<sup>7</sup> The spirit in which Captain Derby received news

<sup>7</sup> The relative tonnage of trading craft before and since the Revolution is a point of interest. William Gray's great fleet, claimed to have been at times the largest in the country, when it did not employ lighters, came up the South River to his little wharf, which was located at the South Bridge. Richard Derby, at various dates, owned amongst his fleet the schooner "Three Brothers," of fifty-five tons, navigated by a master, mate, and three men, which was captured, July, 1759, by a British Privateer, and which was bound to St. Eustatia in 1761; also the "Betsey," of fifty tons, taken in 1761 by a French Cruiser between Newfoundland and Guadeloupe; also the twenty-ton schooner "Mary," sailing, in 1762,

of the first bloodshed appears in his letter of instructions to Captain Hathorne, not before in print, which follows :

"SALEM, MAY Y<sup>e</sup> 9, 1775.

"CAPT. DAN<sup>l</sup> HATHORN OF SCHOONER PATTY, WEST INDIES :

"SIR

"I suppose you will be glad to hear from home, but things are in such a confused state I know not what to write you. Boston is now blocked up by at least 30,000 men. We have had no action since y<sup>e</sup> 19 of April, which was very bloody. They, y<sup>e</sup> Regulars, came out in y<sup>e</sup> night, silently up Cambridge river, and got almost to Concord before day, so that y<sup>e</sup> country had a very short time to get out. Had we had one hour longer not a soul of those blood-thirsty creatures would ever have reached Boston. However, they got a dire drubbing so that they have not played y<sup>e</sup> Yankee tune since. We have lost a number of brave men but we have killed, taken and rendered justice, I believe, at least 8 to 1, and I believe such a spirit never was, everybody striving to excel. We have no Tories, saving what is now shut up in Boston or gone off. There hath not been as yet any stopping of y<sup>e</sup> trade, so I would have you get a load of molasses as good and cheap and as quick as you can and proceed home. If you have not sold, and y<sup>e</sup> markets are bad where you are, you have liberty to proceed any other ways, either to y<sup>e</sup> Mole, Jamaica, or to make a fresh

with three men, to Cape Franeois and the Island of Hispaniola; also the schooners "Polly" and "Ranger," besides the "Patty," Captain Hathorne. Few of the Custom House books, kept before the Revolution, are at the State House, and their loss is in no way accounted for unless by the fire of October, 1774, at Town House Square, or by the evacuation of Boston, March 17, 1776. The Records made between 1774 and 1789 have not been traced at all, although the State Archives contain seven volumes of maritime papers dated between 1775 and 1781. The system of admeasurement has, of course, been changed several times, so that the relative capacity of bottoms is not to be exactly estimated by the nominal tonnage of to-day.

I am indebted to Special Deputy Collector Hitchings of the Custom House at this port, for these facts:

The first Act of Congress since the Constitution, for the admeasurement of vessels, was passed Aug. 4, 1790. It was modified by Act of March 2, 1799, which did not change the method, and this system continued until the Act of May 6, 1864, which made the nominal tonnage of a vessel less. For instance, the Schr. "Montezuma," measuring 99 3.95 under Act of Aug. 4, 1790, measured 65 19.100 tons under Act of May 6, 1864. The Act of Aug. 2, 1882, allowed the deduction of spaces for crew on the gross tonnage, not to exceed 5 per cent. This made the Montezuma's tonnage 65 19.100 gross, — 61 93.100 net. The Act of March 5, 1895, allowed the deduction of all spaces which the crew occupied, and that part of the cabin used exclusively by the Master; also that part used for Boatswain's stores, Anchor gear, Steering gear, Chart-house and Storage of sails, not to exceed 2 1.2 per cent of the gross tonnage, so that the present nominal tonnage nets a little less than two-thirds that of 1790.

There is no information on file at the Custom House of this Port governing the tonnage of vessels prior to the above dates, but if the pre-revolutionary system of admeasurement was like that adopted in 1790, which, in the absence of figures, seems improbable, then it would appear that the "Quero," measuring 62 tons, would if measured since March, 1895, net only 39 2.3 tons. The size of these vessels, carrying a few guns, used in foreign trade and encountering all the perils of freebooters, privateers, and hostile navies, besides those of Atlantic navigation, cannot but excite "our special wonder."

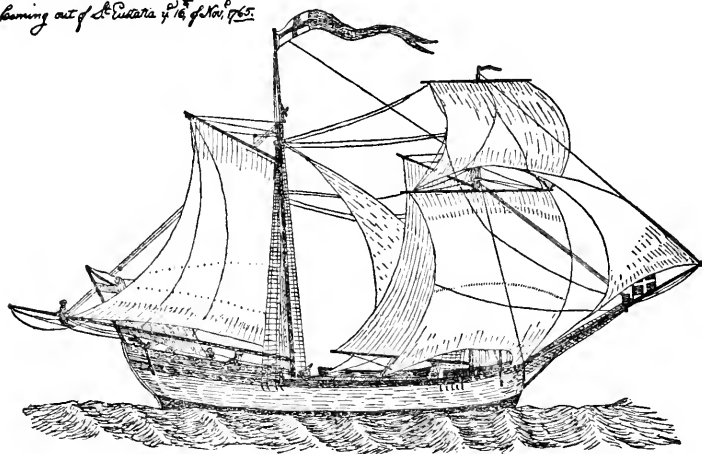
See the Driver Family by Harriet Ruth Waters-Cooke (1889) pp. 103-13. Also Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, "Elias Hasket Derby," Vol. XXXVI, pp. 149-53.

bottom, or anything else that you may think likely to help y<sup>e</sup> voyage, but always to keep your money in your own hands.

I remain your friend and employer,  
 PR. CAPT. CLEVELAND                      RICHARD DERBY."

Captain Richard Derby owned at that time a little, fast-sailing schooner called the "Quero," of 62 tons burden—a mere yacht—and to prepare so small a craft for sea would take but little time, and would employ but few hands, so that the secret could be the better kept. He offered her to the Congress. Captain Derby's two sons, Richard Junior, and John, enlisted with him in the venture. His younger

*This shows the Schooner Battick  
 leaving out of St. Eustacia 4<sup>th</sup> of Nov. 1765.*



son, Elias Hasket Derby, was in his counting-room keeping books. Richard was to fit out and John, thirty-four years old, was to command the "Quero."<sup>8</sup> In a very few days she was ready to weigh anchor. Gage's dispatch by the Royal express-packet "Sukey" had sailed, April 24 ;

<sup>8</sup> A Latinist might say that the *Quero* had been well named, for a craft that was to play at "hide-and-seek" with the British Navy. In point of fact there was a fishing ground about a hundred miles to the eastward of Cape Sable, known as the "Bank of Quero," and much frequented by our hardy fisher-folk in former years. Also there is a river in Honduras, bearing the name "Quero," and flowing into the Caribbean Sea. The river would not be unknown to our traders in the West Indies. From one or the other of these the brave little schooner doubtless got her name. There is a town of "Quero" in the mountains of Spain and another in Italy. But these are both interior towns in no way related to American commerce. What "Quero" means in these connections, the linguists must determine.

but that gave no uneasiness, for the packet was slow and deep-laden. The first difficulty to be encountered was in getting out of port. The "Lively" frigate, destined soon after to fire the opening shot at Bunker Hill, was then on guard off the harbors of Salem, Marblehead and Beverly, to enforce the Port Bill and search every out-going and in-coming vessel.

The Congress at Watertown had, on April 26th, passed a vote accrediting to Franklin Captain Derby's mission, and reciting the grievances which had produced the outbreak. It was in these words :

"IN PROVINCIAL CONGRESS, WATERTOWN, APRIL 26, 1775.

" TO THE HON. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, ESQ., LONDON :

" SIR : From the entire confidence we repose in your faithfulness and abilities, we consider it the happiness of this Colony that the important trust of agency for it, on this day of unequalled distress, is devolved on your hands; and we doubt not your attachment to the cause of the liberties of mankind will make every possible exertion in our behalf a pleasure to you, although our circumstances will compel us often to interrupt your repose by matters that will surely give you pain. A single instance hereof is the occasion of the present letter; the contents of this packet will be our apology for troubling you with it. From these you will see how and by whom we are at last plunged into the horrors of a most unnatural war. Our enemies, we are told, have despatched to *Great Britain* a fallacious account of the tragedy they have begun; to prevent the operation of which to the publick injury, we have engaged the vessel that conveys this to you as a packet in the service of this Colony, and we request your assistance in supplying Captain *Derby*, who commands her, with such necessaries as he shall want, on the credit of your constituents in *Massachusetts-Bay*. But we most ardently wish that the several papers herewith enclosed may be immediately printed and dispersed through every Town in *England*, and especially communicated to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of *London*, that they may take such order thereon as they may think proper; and we are confident your fidelity will make such improvement of them as shall convince all who are not determined to be in everlasting blindness, that it is the united efforts of both *Englands* that must save either. But whatever price our brethren in one may be pleased to put on their constitutional liberties, we are authorized to assure you that the inhabitants of the other, with the greatest unanimity, are inflexibly resolved to sell theirs only at the price of their lives.

" Signed by order of the Provincial Congress :

JOS. WARREN, President *pro tem*."

The following order had previously passed, the same day :

" In provincial Congress, Watertown, Apr 26-1775

" Ordered that y<sup>e</sup> Hona Richd Derby, Esq<sup>r</sup>, be & he here-



by is impowered to fit out his vessel as a packet to Great Britain in y<sup>e</sup> Service of this Colony & to Charge y<sup>e</sup> Colony with y<sup>e</sup> hire of y<sup>e</sup> Vessel & all other expences which he shall be at for port charges Victuelling, necessaries &c

"Ordered that a Committee be now appointed to draught a letter to y<sup>e</sup> agent of this Colony Benjamin Franklin Esqre to be sent with y<sup>e</sup> papers now preparing for G. Britain & that y<sup>e</sup> agent be desired to supply Capt. John Derby with such Necessaries as he shall want, on y<sup>e</sup> Credit of this Colony & to assist & serve sd Capt. Derby in any other respect.

"Ordered that Henry Gardner, Esqre, deliver to the Hon<sup>l</sup> Richard Derby, Esqre, Thirteen Pounds, Six Shillings & eight pence for fitting out his vessel as a packet in y<sup>e</sup> service of this Colony."

Endorsed "order for fitting out a packet handed in by y<sup>e</sup> Committee of safety and passed as an order, April 26, 1775."

At last, on the 27th of April, sailing orders passed the Congress. And the "Quero" seems to have escaped at some hour of the night between the 28th and 29th. Whether the order to land in Ireland was meant in good faith to be observed, or merely as a blind, Captain Derby appears to have disregarded it. The vote of April 27 was as follows :

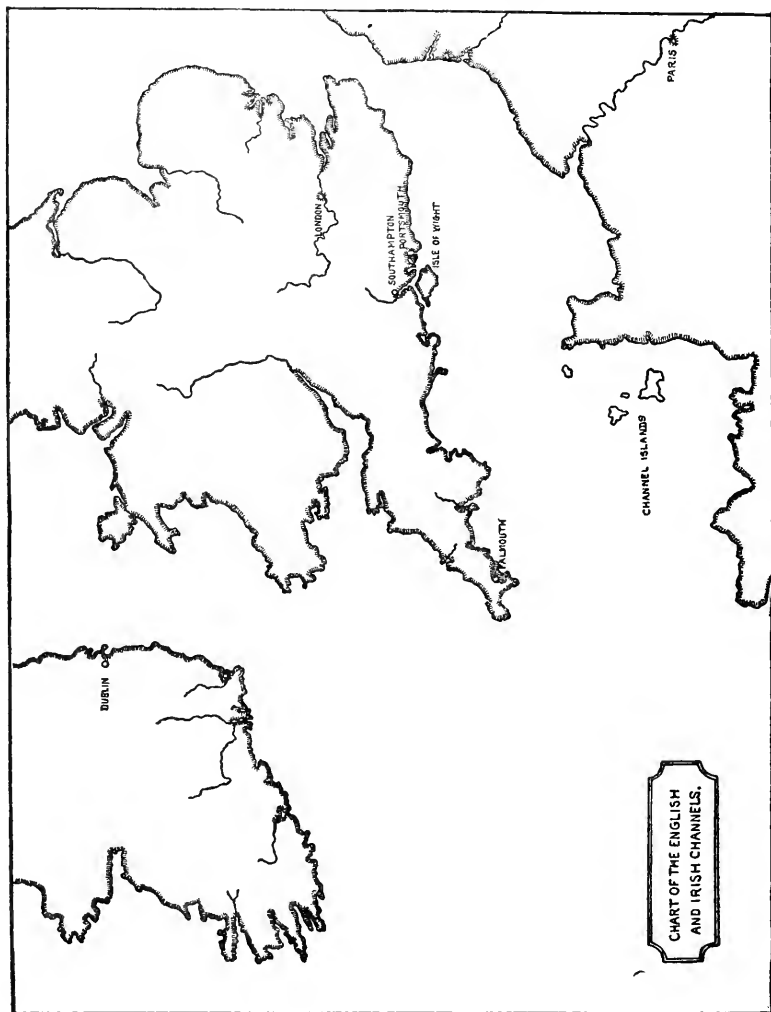
"*Resolved*: that Captain Derby be directed and he hereby is directed to make for Dublin or any other good port in Ireland, and from thence to cross to Scotland or England, and hasten to London. This direction is given that so he may escape all enemies that may be in the chops of the channel to stop the communication of the Provincial intelligence to the agent. He will forthwith deliver his papers to the agent on reaching London.

J. WARREN, *chairman*.

"P. S. You are to keep this order a profound secret from every person on earth."

Thus stoutly equipped the Salem Captain gave himself to the work in hand. He made the best of his way across the ocean and reached port after a twenty-nine days passage — a good passage in those days. Just where he made land it is impossible to say. The conjecture that he was put ashore in a boat in some inlet of the Isle of

Wight, having put his first officer in command, and ordered the "Quero" to Falmouth, at the southwestern extremity



of England, and that he crossed by public conveyance from the Isle of Wight to Southampton, and thence pushed on

to London, would seem to explain all the facts that are absolutely known. The "Quero" can hardly have been at Southampton, from the fact that the Customs Officers in that section, acting upon urgent directions from Whitehall, could find no trace of her. The chances of a successful landing would seem to have been better almost anywhere than in the Channel and close by Portsmouth, the great naval station. Yet the point was near London, and American sailors were at home in those waters, and the boldest risk is often the safest. In one way or another Captain Derby reached London unmolested, May 28, and with his startling intelligence set the Kingdom on fire.

The bills rendered for this extraordinary service are unique and, together with the action of the Congress, are to be read in full in the Archives of Massachusetts. It will be noted that while the Derbys were wonderfully favored in avoiding collisions with the King's Navy they did not wholly escape doing violence to the King's English. They only asserted that common eighteenth-century right, now so generally renounced, which made the spelling of the mother tongue, at that day, a "matter of private judgment." The bill for fitting out the "Quero" was rendered by Richard Derby, Jr., and was paid to Elias Hasket Derby, August 1, 1775. William Gray, the great merchant, seems to have contributed £10, sterling, towards her outfit. The voucher is in these words:

the Province Massachusetts-Bay to Richard Derby jun. Dr for the Hire Victneling, Port Charges, Portledg Bill, &c for the Schooner Quero, Voyage from Salem in New England to Great Britain and back to Salem aforesaid, in the Service of this Colony — viz: with Depositions relative to Battle of Lexington.

1775.

|                        |   |             |
|------------------------|---|-------------|
| April 25 <sup>th</sup> | To 3 barrils Bread w. 2. 3. 0 N. a 25/4 p   | 3. 9. 8.    |
|                        | To 1 bus. Beans 6/, 1 1/2 bus. Pease a 4/   | . 12. .     |
|                        | To 1 <sup>bl</sup> . . Flour 18/, 25 <sup>lb</sup> Candles a 9 <sup>d</sup>   | 1. 16. 9    |
|                        | Charges of Clearing at the Several Offices  | 3 . .       |
| July 19 <sup>th</sup>  | To 20 Tuns Ballust a 2/8 175 feet Plank (P. Measure) a 8/ .p  | 3. 7. 4.    |
|                        | To 2 Cords wood a 13/4 <sup>d</sup> p Smith, Tuttle, & Palfry for Labour 15/,   | 2. 1. 8.    |
|                        | To the am. of Mens wages as p Portledg Bill   | 56. 17. 11½ |
|                        | Hire of Vessell from 25 <sup>th</sup> April to 19 <sup>th</sup> July following is 2 M <sup>o</sup> & 24 days for 62 Tuns a 6/. p Tun p M <sup>o</sup> | 52. 1. 6.   |

## THE CRUISE OF THE "QUERO."

|  |                             |                 |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Prem. of Insurance on £300-out & home<br>a 6 p |                             | 18. . .         |
| Entry at the Custom House viz. Coll.           | 15.6                        |                 |
| N. Office                                      | 6.9                         |                 |
| Camp.  | 4.6                         |                 |
| Impo. Off <sup>e</sup> .                       | 5.-                         |                 |
|  | <hr/>                       |                 |
|  | 1. 11. 9 Sterl <sup>g</sup> |                 |
|  | is                          | 2. 2. 4         |
|  |                             | <hr/>           |
|  |                             | £ 143. 9. 2 1/2 |

1775

|                      |  |                          |                 |
|----------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------|
| April 27             | Cr. by Cash Rec <sup>d</sup> . p W <sup>m</sup> . Gray                       | £10-Sterl <sup>g</sup> . |                 |
|                      | is   |                          | 13. 6. 8        |
| July 19th            | by 3 barrils Beef-40/  |                          | 6.              |
| Retu <sup>d</sup> in | 2 barrils Pork a 54/.  |                          | 5. 8            |
| the Schoo-<br>ner    | 2 barrils Bread w. 1 <sup>c</sup> . 3 <sup>q</sup> . 26 <sup>lb</sup> a 25/4 | 2. 10. 2                 |                 |
|                      |  | <hr/>                    |                 |
|                      |  |                          | 27. 4. 10       |
|                      |  |                          | <hr/>           |
|                      |  |                          | £ 116. 4. 4 1/2 |
|                      |  |                          | <hr/>           |

Salem 25 July 1775  
Errors Excepted  
Richard Derby Jun<sup>r</sup>.

Salem 25 July 1775. Please Order the Amount of the Above Account  
to be paid M<sup>r</sup> Elias Hasket Derby, for acc<sup>e</sup>. of  
Richard Derby Jr.

*Rich<sup>d</sup>. Derby's account*  
Doc Church  
Coll Orne  
Capt. Batchelder

Rich<sup>d</sup>. Derby's acc<sup>t</sup>

Resolved. That the Committee having examined the inclosed acc<sup>ts</sup>  
of Richard Derby Esq<sup>r</sup> & John Derby find them properly vouched &  
right cast, and w<sup>d</sup> recommend that Directions be given to the Treas-  
urer of this Province to discharge the within Acc<sup>ts</sup> agreeable to the  
Orders annexed to said Acc<sup>ts</sup>.

pr Benja Church jun<sup>r</sup>. Chairman.The House of Representatives Aug<sup>t</sup> 1 1775.

Resolved. That there be paid to Rich<sup>d</sup>. Derby jr Esq<sup>r</sup>. or his  
Order out of the publick Treasury of this Colony the sum of £116.-  
4-4 1/2 in full of the within account-

sent up for concurrence  
Jas : Warren Speak<sup>r</sup>

Aug<sup>t</sup>. 1<sup>st</sup> 1775.

In Council read &amp; Concurred

Attest P Morton, Secr<sup>y</sup> pro temp.

Consented to

James Otis  
W Sever  
B Greenleaf

Eldad Taylor  
Mich<sup>l</sup>: Farley  
Jabez Fisher

W Spooner  
Caleb Cushing  
John Whetcomb  
Jed<sup>h</sup>. Foster  
B Lincoln

Moses Gill  
John Taylor  
B White  
Cha Chauncy

38

[Endorsed] Ent<sup>d</sup>  
Grant to Rich<sup>d</sup> Derby  
of 116.4/4 1/2-  
August 1. 1775  
Recorded page 29  
9- -N<sup>o</sup>.  $\frac{1}{2}$

The modest account rendered by Captain John<sup>r</sup> Derby himself, in which he estimates his splendid service as of no money value, finding remuneration enough in his success, must be seen in *fac-simile*. It seems to show that he had been at the Isle of Wight, had landed in that region, and had reëmbarked for home at or near Falmouth.

This is a transcript of it with its endorsements :

The Colony of Massachusetts bay to John Derby Dr:  
in Schooner Quero

|        |   |            |
|--------|---|------------|
| 1775   |   |            |
| Aprill | To Sundry Stores for my Passage to England  | 5. 0. 0.   |
| 28     |   |            |
| May    | To Expences at the Island White & Southampton   | 3. 5. 0    |
|        | To my Expences & Post Chaise hire from Southamp-<br>ton to London 80 miles a 9 <sup>d</sup> p mile  | } 4. 15. 0 |
|        | My Expences in London   | 7. 17. 0   |
|        | Post Chaise hire from London to Falmouth in the<br>west of England by the way of Portsmouth 294<br>miles a 9 <sup>d</sup> p mile, Except the two First Stages from<br>London which is 1/ p mile | 11. 8. 0   |
|        | To My Expences from London to Falmouth  | 2. 5. 0    |
|        | To paid the Sarcher & waiters at Falmouth   | 1. 0. 0    |
|        | Sum See Coles for Firing  | 1. 4. 0    |
|        | To Light money, Pierage, & Clearance at Castle &c   | 3. 12. 0   |
|        | 3 <sup>bb</sup> Bread a 19/ & Carriage  | 2. 17. 8   |
|        | 56 <sup>lb</sup> Beef a 3 <sup>d</sup> , 12 <sup>lb</sup> Candles a 9 <sup>d</sup>  | 1. 3. 0    |
|        | Small Bear, Greans &c for the People  | 1. 15. 0   |
|        | To Boat hire to Fill our warter at Falmouth   | 4. 0       |
|        | To my Private Expences at Falmouth  | 2. 0. 0    |
|        | To Sundry Neceary Stores for my Passage home to }<br>New England  | } 8. 15. 0 |
|        | To my time in Executing the Voige from hence to }<br>London & Back  | } 0        |

Starling £ 57. 0. 8

Salem 25 July 1775

Errors Excepted

John Derby

Pleas to pay the within to M<sup>r</sup>: Ealias Hasket Derby & you'll oblige  
your Very Humble Sarvant

John Derby

In the

House of Representatives Aug<sup>st</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> 1775

Resolved that there be paid out of the publick Treasury of this Colony to Mr John Derby or his Order the sum of £ 57. 0. 8 sterling agreeable to the within Account

Sent up for Concurrence

Jas : Warren Speak<sup>r</sup>

Aug<sup>t</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> 1775

In Council read & concurred

Attest P Morton Secr<sup>y</sup> protemp

Consented to

James Otis

W Sever

B Greenleaf

W Spooner

Caleb Cushing

J Winthrop

John Whetcomb

Jed<sup>h</sup> Foster

B Lincoln

Eldad Taylor

Cha Chauncy

Mich<sup>l</sup>: Farley

Jabez Fisher

Moses Gill

John Taylor

[Endorsed:]

Ent<sup>d</sup> 40

Cap<sup>t</sup> John Derby's

ac<sup>t</sup> granted 57/8

Ster<sup>£</sup> August 1 1775

Recorded page 31

Doc<sup>r</sup> Church)

9- N<sup>o</sup>. 8

Coll Orne)

2

Cap<sup>t</sup> Batchleder) com<sup>tee</sup>

The Quero's inward manifest, sworn to at the Salem Impost Office, July 19, by William Carlton,<sup>9</sup> Master, de-

<sup>9</sup>What manner of men were the Carltons a word will illustrate. There were two brothers: Col. Samuel Carlton, whose letter from Valley Forge, never before printed, has the ring of true metal. For him Carlton street was named. William Carlton married a Palfray and was the father of a son and namesake who edited in succession the Salem Gazette and the Essex Register. Both were shipmasters in the employ of Capt. Derby.

"When the battle of Bunker Hill was fought," says the venerable George Rea Curwen, "my great grandfather, Col. Samuel Carlton, was in England. He came home at once, went to his house on Union street, and hired a drummer and fifer to go with him through Essex street to Buffum's Corner, to see if he could drum up a company of volunteers; he didn't succeed; but the next day he went up to Buffum's Corner again with his drummer and fifer and got a company together and took them down to his house on Union street, and drilled them. After he got them drilled he went off to the war with them taking the command: he very soon rose to be Colonel and General Washington spoke in the highest terms of him, describing him as one of the most intrepid officers he had under him. The Colonel took a pane of glass out of one of his front windows and put in a wooden one instead and painted on it *This pane pays no Tax.*"

This is his letter:

CAMP VALLEY FORGE, MAR. 21st, 1778.

DEAR CHILD,

With pleasure I received yours of the 14th inst., by Mr. Harris who informs me the family are well, which I rejoice to hear. You make mention of hard times. Don't let that expression roll over the tongue or come from the point of a pen of a daughter of a patriot, which by the way I have the honor to bear that character. Hard times! hard times! No, there is no such thing. What! when the Goddess Liberty [who knows the sweets of that unparalleled Jewel?] is affording us all her assistance! and therefore, must enjoy it upon you not to even think anything hard or insurmountable, for if my old worn out life should go a sacrifice, and go when it will it shall go a willing one if we can obtain that precious jewel.

In haste your affectionate father

SAM<sup>L</sup> CARLTON.

The Colony of Massachusetts Bay to John Derby <sup>in Schooner Quess</sup> 1778

April To Sundry Stores for my Passage to England ..... 5<sup>00</sup> 00  
 May To Expences at the Island White & Southhampton 3<sup>00</sup> 80  
 To my Expences & Post Chaise hire from  
 Southhampton to London 80 miles & 2/3 mile } 4<sup>00</sup> 15<sup>00</sup>  
 My Expences in London ..... 7<sup>00</sup> 17<sup>00</sup>  
 Post Chaise hire from London to Falmouth  
 in the west of England by the way of Portsmouth  
 294 miles & 2/3 mile, Except the two first  
 stages from London which is 1/3 mile ..... 11<sup>00</sup> 08<sup>00</sup>  
 To my Expences from London to Falmouth ..... 2<sup>00</sup> 51<sup>00</sup>  
 To pay the Parcher & waiters at Falmouth ..... 1<sup>00</sup> 00<sup>00</sup>  
 Sum too Coler for Firing ..... 1<sup>00</sup> 46<sup>00</sup>  
 To Light money, Passage, & Clearance at Castle &c 3<sup>00</sup> 12<sup>00</sup> 00  
 3<sup>00</sup> Bread & 1/4 of Carriage ..... 2<sup>00</sup> 17<sup>00</sup> 08  
 56<sup>00</sup> Beef 23 12<sup>00</sup> Candles &c ..... 1<sup>00</sup> 30<sup>00</sup>  
 Small Beers, Greens &c for the People ..... 1<sup>00</sup> 15<sup>00</sup> 00  
 To Boat hire to fill our master w<sup>th</sup> Falmouth ..... 1<sup>00</sup> 00  
 To my Private Expences at Falmouth ..... 2<sup>00</sup> 00<sup>00</sup>  
 To Sundry Necessary Stores for my Passage  
 home to New England ..... } 8<sup>00</sup> 15<sup>00</sup> 00  
 To my time in executing the Voyage home  
 unto London & Back ..... } 0<sup>00</sup> 00<sup>00</sup>  
 Sterling £ 57<sup>00</sup> 08<sup>00</sup>

Salem 25 July 1778

Errors Excepted

John Derby





scribes her as from Falmouth, in ballast, without passengers, freight or consignee. This would seem to make it probable that Derby did not return in her to Salem. Doubtless he bore secret dispatches to the Commander-in-Chief and probably enough he may have come ashore on Ipswich Beach, and from that point taken the Old Boston Road through North Beverly and Danvers to Cambridge, thus avoiding the risks awaiting Yankee vessels between the Capes of Massachusetts Bay. That he reported to Washington in person on the 18th of July appears from the Essex Gazette for that month. This is its statement:

"CAMBRIDGE, JULY 21.

"Capt. John Derby, who sailed from Salem for London a few Days after the Battle of Lexington, returned last Tuesday, and the same Day came to Head-Quarters in this Place. Very little Intelligence has yet transpired — we only learn, that the News of the Commencement of the American War threw the People in England, especially the City of London, into great Consternation, and occasioned a considerable Fall of the Stocks: That the Ministry (knowing nothing of the Battle till they saw it published in the London papers) advertised, in the Gazette, that they had received no Account of any Action, and *pretended* to believe that there had been none: That the Parliament was prorogued two Days before Capt. Derby arrived, but it was said would be immediately called together again. That, when he left London, which was about the 1st of June, no Account of Hostilities had been received by the Ministry from General Gage, notwithstanding the Vessel he dispatched sailed four Days before Capt. Derby: That our Friends increased in Number; and that many who had remained neuter in the Dispute, began to express themselves warmly in our Favor: That we, however, have no Reason to expect any Mercy from the Ministry, who seem determined to pursue their Measures (long since concerted) for ruining the British Empire.

"Capt. Derby brought a few London Papers, some as late as the first of June, but we have not been able to obtain a Sight of them. We are informed they contain very little News, and scarce any Remarks on American Affairs."

A word about John Derby should close this account of the "Quero" incident. He was of English stock, thirty-four years old, and well connected. He was twice married, but left no child. His first marriage was with Hannah Clarke who died in 1786. She was of the Ferneaux-Clarks of Salem and her aunt had married William Fairfax, the Royal Collector of Customs at Salem, with whom she had emigrated to Virginia, and was the mother of the eighth Lord Fairfax, the only Peer of England ever born in Salem, and later of daughters who inter-

married with the Washingtons. For his second wife he chose, in 1787, the widow Elizabeth Pierce of Boston, whose sister was the wife of the Honorable Caleb Davis, the first Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives under the Constitution of 1780 — holding for eight years a seat there and in the old Assembly — a member of the Convention which ratified the Federal Constitution in 1788 and, in 1789, a member of the electoral College which made Washington our first President. Captain Derby's mother was a Hodges of Salem and this connection allies him with Joseph Hodges Choate and with many another scion of the best blood of New England. Rogers, the sculptor, and "John Phœnix," [Lieutenant Derby] the wit, were both of his kindred, as well as distinguished Derbys too numerous to mention. His brother, Elias Hasket Derby, the pioneer of the India trade, perhaps as great a merchant as New England has produced, married Elizabeth Crowninshield and his sister Mary married George Crowninshield. His brother Richard married Lydia Gardner and his sister Sarah married John Gardner.

Of his father's descent it is enough to say that he was of Devonshire stock. Roger Darby, a member of the society of Friends, came here to brave this inhospitable atmosphere in 1671, and dying in 1698 left a will duly proven before the Honourable Jonathan Corwin, the Witchcraft Magistrate, by which he distributed amongst his round dozen heirs, six sons and six daughters, certain comfortable messuages, with wharves, warehouses, two servants, Cate and Cæsar, a tankard, and other indications of provident forecasting. He had a son Richard, who married — the record calls him "Derbe" — Martha, daughter of Col. Elias Hasket, a Royal Governor of the Bahamas, and through this Richard, who was a Provincial pilot in the Port Royal Expedition of 1710 and through this Richard's son, — again named Richard, the merchant-patriot of the North Bridge incident, — the Quaker, Roger Darby, had transmitted his name and lineage to John Derby of the "Quero." Americans are not numerous who have been progenitors of a more distinguished line. Following the sea, as everybody in Salem did who was





CAPTAIN JOHN DERBY

1741-1812

Engraved for the Century Magazine from a portrait painted from the life  
by Gilbert Stuart in 1809

able-bodied and had ambition, the Derbys before the Revolution had one after another amassed a competency, had done their part to develop trade and build up the neighborhood, and had died respected.

Four times had the sturdy Quaker and his English wife been fined "for not coming to meeting on the Lord's Dayes" before they had lived here six years — both of them committed and their homestead "ceased" on execution for non-payment. Whether Roger began the structure which afterwards developed into Derby Wharf when his neighbor and contemporary, Philip English, the witchcraft victim, began the Crowninshield Wharf, is not apparent. But when his grandson, the North Bridge hero, whose portrait we are able to produce from a painting by Sargent, a copy of which by Southard is in the Essex Institute, died in 1783, he had a chariot and pair to leave to his estimable relict; houses for her and for each of his daughters; a wharf, warehouses, dockage, and vessels, with the usual concomitants of plate, tankards and household belongings, not omitting negro servants to be provided for. And we give a sketch of the substantial, dignified red-brick homestead which he built, a little retired from the rough cartway or lane connecting the wharves and dockage of the fine old seaport — a way soon to become the Derby Street of Hawthorne's Custom House and Salem's commercial prime. The house still stands with its buttressed walls, its dormer windows, its panelled wainscoting and its moulded English bricks, to bear witness to its ancient grandeur and, as Hawthorne somewhere says of another, to protest against the encroachments of the bustling present.

No son of Harvard ever sees it without thinking of old Massachusetts Hall, erected at Cambridge in 1718. The private way, which was known in deeds as "Mansfield's Lane," in 1732-41, and in 1771 as the "way by the Harbour or South River," began to be "Derby Street, — so called" in 1774, and before the end of the century was duly installed as "Derby Street" in full standing. How the name "Derby" or "Darby" first found its way to Salem I do not know. There was a "Darby Fort" at Naugus Head as early as 1635, and about that very year Father

Woodbury, the old planter and first Constable of Salem, married for his second wife Avis, the widow of John Darby of Marblehead. Whatever its origin, the name well fitted one of the great thoroughfares of Salem. It was well that the eight-foot way skirting the North River, from the ancient Bass River ferry to the Town Bridge at Blubber Hollow, should develop into the modern "Bridge Street." It was well that the crooked lane which divided our first town lots should become the "Old Main Street" and King's Street and Queen's Street and Cheapside and Old Paved Street and should at last be known from Neck Gate to Buffum's Corner by the name of Essex Street. It is well that the elm-roofed highway which brought Lafayette from the Marblehead line to the centre of the town — its generous proportions and stately shade we owe to Ezekiel Hersey Derby — should bear the name of Lafayette. And it is well that the cart-track which united all our busy docks in the early eighteenth century should have grown into a commodious street to bear, from Block House Square to the Railroad Station, the honored name of Derby.

No name in local annals has been more honorably distinguished from the day when, a full century before the declaration of our political freedom, old Roger Darby, a candle-maker like Franklin's father, and a Quaker, began in 1676 to feed the "inward light" by standing out for the rights of conscience, down through the Civil War, when one of his blood embodied the patriotic sentiment of the time in the statuettes of Rogers.

It was a Derby who piloted our fleet to victory in 1710 through the defences of Port Royal. It was a Derby who furnished Salem in 1749 with her first fire-engine. The long pile-wharves which began to stretch seaward in 1765 in front of the then new Derby Homestead bear the name of Derby. One of the little group who stemmed the tide of Gage's passion in August, 1774, was Richard Derby, and some of the guns were his for which Gage was struggling without success in the February that followed. It was a Derby that took the news of Lexington to London in advance of the Government in 1775 and a Derby that brought the news of peace from Paris in 1783 in the nine-

teen days' trip of the Derby ship "Astræa." From 1769 throughout the century the family held seats at the Executive Council Board or in the House of Assembly or in the Provincial Congress. In 1783 a Derby built, just across the way, her bowsprit almost reaching over the front garden plot of the old mansion, the "Grand Turk" whose five hundred and sixty tons ranked her the largest ship afloat in our waters, and they sent her pioneering to open the trade of America with China. In 1790 they introduced scientific gardening and imported floriculture. In 1792 John Derby's ship "Columbia" discovered and named the great Columbia River. In 1792 one of them received a deputation from a French fleet to acknowledge his manly treatment of some Frenchmen who had been his prisoners. And one of them, in 1799, just a century ago, in command of his armed merchantman, the "Mount Vernon," beat off the combined attack from the French and Spanish fleets of a sloop-of-war and a frigate. In 1798 a Derby was one of two to subscribe \$10,000 towards building the frigate "Essex," and she was launched from a yard at Winter Island near Salem Neck leased by the town for a thousand years to another of the Derbys. In 1799 a Derby built the stateliest mansion ever reared in Salem. In 1802 Derbys were largely instrumental in grading and beautifying the Common; in 1805 a Derby gave us our noble avenue to Marblehead and Swampscott. In 1816 the Derby Square was donated to the town for a market-place and council-house forever. In 1818 a Derby was on the Federal Commission which built the Custom House on a part of the Derby acres, and he offered to remove a warehouse which obstructed the water view, binding his estate never to erect another structure between the Custom House and the water.

The considerable block of land upon which, in the midst of many other buildings, the Custom House and the Derby Homestead both stand to-day, extending from Orange Street to Palfray Court along the Derby Street front, was Captain Richard Derby's demesne. Upon the marriage of his daughter, Mary, with George Crowninshield, an estate was set off to her in the southwesterly corner of it, upon which her husband built a fine mansion-house of







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